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Letter dated 20 July 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Myanmar to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to my letter dated 27 June 2018, I have the honour to write to you once again to update you on the recent developments and initiatives taken by the Government of Myanmar in relation to the three main areas identified by the Security Council in our effort to continue constructive and collaborative dialogue to find a durable solution to the humanitarian situation in Rakhine State.

Implementation of the memorandum of understanding

Subsequent to the signing, on 6 June 2018, of the memorandum of understanding between the Government of Myanmar and two United Nations agencies, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the first technical working group meeting to implement the memorandum of understanding was held on 11 July 2018. At the meeting, both sides exchanged views on the proposed workplan initiated by UNDP and UNHCR as well as the visit of the technical working group to the region in order to launch the assessment at 31 village tracts under Butheetaung, Maungtaw and Rathetaung Townships in Northern Rakhine State.

The second meeting of the technical working group was held in Nay Pyi Taw on 18 July 2018 and deliberated on the initial visit of the technical working group to Butheetaung and Maungtaw Township from 21 to 23 July 2018. In line with the proposed workplan, both sides will effectively implement the memorandum of understanding based on the three-month and six-month period programmes. The workplan includes initiatives to promote sustained socioeconomic development, health and education and to create a conducive environment to further enhance harmony and coexistence among the communities in Northern Rakhine State.

From 2 to 4 July, a joint UNHCR and UNDP delegation, led by the visiting UNHCR Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific and accompanied by the UNDP Country Director for Myanmar, travelled to Rakhine State to have initial consultations with different communities regarding their situation and to discuss ways in which the Government could improve their situation and resolve their underlying problems, including in terms of livelihoods, access to services, safety and security and how the agencies could support those efforts. It was the first visit to the area by United Nations agencies since the conclusion of the memorandum of understanding between the Government of Myanmar, UNDP and UNHCR.

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Addressing accountability

Following the announcement of the Government on 31 May 2018 to establish an Independent Commission of Enquiry as part of its national initiative to address reconciliation, peace, stability and development in Rakhine, the Government has now completed the selection process for the composition of the Commission.

I am pleased to inform you that the Government of Myanmar will announce the establishment of the Independent Commission of Enquiry shortly.

Recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State

The Advisory Board of the Committee for the Implementation of the Recommendations on Rakhine State, headed by the Chair, Surakiart Sathirathai, met with senior Officials of the Government in Nay Pyi Taw on 17 July 2018. The workplan of the Advisory Board and implementation of the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State were discussed.

The Government continues to implement the recommendations of the Advisory Commission in earnest. At the same time, it attaches great importance to the advice and opinion of the Advisory Board in the course of implementing the Commission's recommendations.

Progress of the repatriation process

According to a recent government report, as of 11 July 2018, a total of 3,043 names have been verified, finding 2,537 as Myanmar residents, 34 as terrorists and 472 as having no records, from the list of 8,032 persons presented by Bangladesh in January 2018.

In order to increase international cooperation on the repatriation process, the Government received UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director for the Regional Bureau for Asia and Pacific, Haoliang Xu, in Nay Pyi Taw, on 12 July 2018 to discuss the implementation of the memorandum of understanding between Myanmar, UNDP and UNHCR. On the same day, the Director General of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), William Lacy Swing, met with officials and discussed matters relating to assistance provided by IOM to Myanmar and the progress of the peace and reconciliation process in the country.

On 13 July 2018, Sun Guoxiang, the Special Envoy for Asian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China met with officials in Nay Pyi Taw and had consultations on the peace and reconciliation process in Myanmar and China's continued provision of constructive assistance for Rakhine State.

On 16 July 2018, Hiroto Izumi, the Special Advisor of the Prime Minister of Japan was in Nay Pyi Taw and discussed with the authorities issues related to the peace and reconciliation process and the implementation of development projects in Rakhine State.

The Government also received Victoria Kwakwa, Vice President of the East Asia and Pacific Region of the World Bank Group in Nay Pyi Taw on 10 July 2018. The World Bank pledged support for peace, social inclusion and economic transition in Myanmar. Matters concerning progress in the repatriation and resettlement of the displaced persons from Rakhine State, creating economic opportunities for all communities, including those who are in conflict-affected areas in Rakhine State, the development of projects focusing on microenterprise and small enterprise development, and access to essential social services, were also discussed during her visit.

Regarding bilateral cooperation between Myanmar and Bangladesh, the Minister for the Ministry of the Office of the State Counsellor, U Kyaw Tint Swe met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, Abul Hassan Mahmood Ali, and discussed the issue of repatriation during the visit to China at the invitation of the State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Wang Yi. In this regard, Myanmar wishes to express its appreciation to China in reaching the four-point principled common understanding during the meeting.

Following the visit to China, Myanmar has invited Foreign Minister Ali to visit Myanmar from 8 to 11 August to hold further discussions on expediting the repatriation process.

Cooperation with the Special Envoy

The Government of Myanmar has facilitated the visits of Christine Burgener, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar. The first visit was from 12 to 21 June 2018 and the second visit was from 10 to 13 July 2018 to take part in the Union Peace Conference. Myanmar has already agreed to the proposed opening of her office in Nay Pyi Taw. Myanmar is committed to maintaining a constructive and fruitful relationship with the Special Envoy in its efforts to deepen the partnership with the United Nations in addressing the complex challenges confronting the country, particularly in Rakhine State.

I would highly appreciate it if the present letter could be circulated among the members of the Security Council as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Hau Do **Suan**
Permanent Representative